

How Common Are Nonstandard Work Schedules Among Low-Income Hispanic Parents of Young Children?

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Abstract:

As the United States has shifted to a 24/7 economy, increasing numbers of U.S. workers work nonstandard hours (i.e., beyond the traditional Monday to Friday daytime schedule).¹ Given that early care and education (ECE) options are limited during these hours, nonstandard work schedules may make it difficult for families to secure and maintain regular ECE arrangements.² These challenges are most acute for parents in the low-wage workforce who have fewer resources and often less control over the amount and timing of their work hours. Nonstandard schedules, especially those with unpredictable hours and limited worker input, also reduce the likelihood that eligible parents will access and maintain child care subsidies—a key public investment strategy for supporting low-income working parents with young children.³

Recognition of the potential mismatch between low-income parents' employment demands and the parameters of ECE programs intended to serve them has prompted new policy efforts to expand access to ECE for those with nonstandard work schedules. For example, the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) includes a provision encouraging states to increase the supply and quality of care services available during nontraditional hours.

However, significant gaps persist in what is known about low-income Hispanic parents' work lives and how they relate to ECE access and utilization. Hispanic parents and immigrant workers are over-represented in the low-wage workforce, where nonstandard schedules are commonplace,⁴ but recent national data indicate that most ECE providers who serve a high proportion of Hispanic children do not offer full-time or nonstandard hours.⁵ The limited availability of ECE options during nonstandard hours, especially for developmentally oriented programs like public pre-K and Head Start, raises important questions about how low-income Hispanic parents' work schedules influence their ability to take advantage of the publicly funded early education opportunities targeted toward their children.

This brief draws on survey and retrospective calendar data from the 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to describe the work schedules of low-income Hispanic

parents with young children from birth to age 5 (not yet in kindergarten), and provide comparison data for their non-Hispanic white and black counterparts.^a We calculate the percentages of low-income Hispanic children with parents working standard weekday, early morning, evening, overnight, and/or weekend hours. We also examine the percentage of children whose parents have short advance notice (one week or less) of their work hours, which has been shown to complicate parents' efforts to arrange child care and maintain family routines.⁶

Importantly, we report estimates separately for children in single- and two-parent households, as families' ECE needs, preferences, and options vary depending on the number of parents in the home.^b We additionally look at differences among Hispanic children by household nativity status.

Keywords: Hispanic parents | Hispanic children | Low-income families | Work schedules | Child care | Early care education

*****Note: Full text of article below**

How Common Are Nonstandard Work Schedules Among Low-Income Hispanic Parents of Young Children?

Danielle Crosby and Julia Mendez

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Why research on low-income Hispanic children and families matters

Hispanic or Latino children currently make up roughly 1 in 4 of all children in the United States,^a and by 2050 are projected to make up 1 in 3, similar to the number of white children.^b Given this increase, how Hispanic children fare will have a profound impact on the social and economic well-being of the country as a whole.

Notably, though, 5.7 million Hispanic children, or one third of all Hispanic children in the United States, are in poverty, more than in any other racial/ethnic group.^c Nearly two thirds of Hispanic children live in low-income families, defined as having incomes of less than two times the federal poverty level.^d Despite their high levels of economic need, Hispanics, particularly those in immigrant families, have lower rates of participation in many government support programs when compared with other racial/ethnic minority groups.^{e-g} High-quality, research-based information on the characteristics, experiences, and diversity of Hispanic children and families is needed to inform programs and policies supporting the sizable population of low-income Hispanic families and children.

^a Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2017). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2017*, Table POP3. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. Retrieved from <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp>.

^b Ibid.

^c DeNavas-Walt, C. & Proctor, B.D. (2015). *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014*, Table B-2, Current Population Reports, P60-252. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-252.pdf#TableB-2>.

^d Lopez, M. H. & Velasco, G. (2011). *Childhood poverty among Hispanics sets record, leads nation*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Hispanic Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/09/28/childhood-poverty-among-hispanics-sets-record-leads-nation/>.

^e Williams, S. (2013). *Public assistance participation among U.S. children in poverty, 2010*. Bowling Green, Ohio: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from http://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=nfmr_family_profiles.

^f Lichter, D., Sanders, S., & Johnson, K. (2015). *Behind at the starting line: Poverty among Hispanic infants*. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Carsey School of Public Policy. Retrieved from <http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1250&context=carsey>.

^g Child Trends Databank. (2014). *Health care coverage*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=health-care-coverage>.

Overview

As the United States has shifted to a 24/7 economy, increasing numbers of U.S. workers work nonstandard hours (i.e., beyond the traditional Monday to Friday daytime schedule).¹ Given that early care and education (ECE) options are limited during these hours, nonstandard work schedules may make it difficult for families to secure and maintain regular ECE arrangements.² These challenges are most acute for parents in the low-wage workforce who have fewer resources and often less control over the amount and timing of their work hours. Nonstandard schedules, especially those with unpredictable hours and limited worker input, also reduce the likelihood that eligible parents will access and maintain child care subsidies—a key public investment strategy for supporting low-income working parents with young children.³

Recognition of the potential mismatch between low-income parents' employment demands and the parameters of ECE programs intended to serve them has prompted new policy efforts to expand access to ECE for those with nonstandard work schedules. For example, the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) includes a provision encouraging states to increase the supply and quality of care services available during nontraditional hours.

However, significant gaps persist in what is known about low-income Hispanic parents' work lives and how they relate to ECE access and utilization. Hispanic parents and immigrant workers are over-represented in the low-wage workforce, where nonstandard schedules are commonplace,⁴ but recent national data indicate that most ECE providers who serve a high proportion of Hispanic children do not offer full-time or nonstandard hours.⁵ The limited availability of ECE options during nonstandard hours, especially for developmentally oriented programs like public pre-K and Head Start, raises important questions about how low-income Hispanic parents' work schedules influence their ability to take advantage of the publicly funded early education opportunities targeted toward their children.

This brief draws on survey and retrospective calendar data from the 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to describe the work schedules of low-income Hispanic parents with young

children from birth to age 5 (not yet in kindergarten), and provide comparison data for their non-Hispanic white and black counterparts.^a We calculate the percentages of low-income Hispanic children with parents working standard weekday, early morning, evening, overnight, and/or weekend hours. We also examine the percentage of children whose parents have short advance notice (one week or less) of their work hours, which has been shown to complicate parents' efforts to arrange child care and maintain family routines.⁶

Importantly, we report estimates separately for children in single- and two-parent households, as families' ECE needs, preferences, and options vary depending on the number of parents in the home.^b We additionally look at differences among Hispanic children by household nativity status.

Key Findings

Parental work during nonstandard hours is a common experience for young children in low-income households. Nationally, Hispanic children experience parental work schedules similar to their white and black peers, with a majority of working parents reporting early morning, evening, and/or weekend hours as part of their schedule. Many low-income parents also receive short advance notice of their work hours—particularly common in immigrant Hispanic households. Such nonstandard work schedules can pose challenges for establishing and maintaining family routines and for accessing early childhood care and education.

Key findings include:

- More than 3 in 4 Hispanic children whose parents reported work activity in the past week have a parent who worked during nonstandard times. Most of these parents also reported some work during standard weekday times.
- Early morning (5–8 am), evening (6 pm–12 am), and weekend parental work hours are a relatively common experience for low-income Hispanic children, affecting one-third to two-thirds of those with working parents, depending on the type of hours and whether the child lives with one or both parents.
- On the other hand, overnight parental work hours (12–5 am) are a relatively rare experience for low-income Hispanic children, affecting less than 5 percent of children with working parents in single-parent households, and less than 10 percent in two-parent households.

^a In this analysis, child race/ethnicity is based on information provided by the household survey respondent. Children are classified as Hispanic/Latino if this was provided as a response to the question about ethnicity or the question about race. The white and black child race categories do not include children who were identified as multi-racial.

^b Other nonparental adults in the household may serve important roles in the economic and child care needs of the household; however, we focus these analyses on the work characteristics and schedule of children's parents—in part because parents are typically children's main caregivers and their work schedules likely shape parental time, family routines, and the organization of family life.

- There are few group race/ethnic differences in the timing of parents' work activities.
 - In single-parent homes, Hispanic children are more likely than their black peers to have a parent working weekend hours.
 - In two-parent homes, Hispanic children are less likely than their white and black peers to have a parent working evening hours, and less likely than black peers to have a parent working overnight hours.
- Half of Hispanic children in low-income households have a parent who receives short advance notice of their work hours (i.e., one week or less); this is higher than for some other groups.
 - In single-parent homes, Hispanic children are more likely to have a parent with short advance notice of work hours than their black peers.
 - In two-parent homes, Hispanic children are more likely to have a parent with short advance notice of work hours than their white peers.
- Hispanic children in immigrant and nonimmigrant households have similar parental work schedules, with two exceptions. First, Hispanic children in two-parent immigrant households are more likely than their peers in U.S.-born households to have a parent who works weekend hours. Second, Hispanic children in immigrant households are more likely than those in U.S.-born households to have a parent who receives short advance notice of their work hours (roughly 60 percent and 40 percent, respectively).

About This Series

This brief is part of an ongoing series aimed at better understanding the intersection of work and family dynamics for Hispanic households, with particular attention to children's early care and education experiences. This brief uses data from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)—a set of four integrated, nationally representative surveys that describe the ECE landscape in the United States.

Related briefs in this series include:

Crosby, D.A., Mendez, J.L., Guzman, L., & López, M. (2016). *Hispanic Children's Participation in Early Care and Education: Type of Care by Household Nativity Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Child Age*. Bethesda, MD: The National Center for Research on Hispanic Families & Children.

Crosby, D.A. & Mendez, J.L. (2016). *Hispanic Children's Participation in Early Care and Education: Amount and Timing of Hours by Household Nativity Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Child Age*. Bethesda, MD: The National Center for Research on Hispanic Families & Children.

Guzman, L., Hickman, S., Turner, K., & Gennetian, L. (2017). *How well are early care and education providers who serve Hispanic children doing on access and availability?* Bethesda, MD: National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families.

These publications can be found on the Center's website at: <http://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/nrc/resources/publications/>.

Data Source and Methodology

The 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) is a set of four nationally representative surveys that describe the early care and education (ECE) landscape in the United States.^a The data presented in this brief are drawn from the household survey of the NSECE, a nationally representative sample of households with children under age 13. We focus on young children (birth to age 5, not yet in kindergarten^b) and their parents who live in low-income households, defined as those with an annual income below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. The NSECE oversampled in low-income areas, resulting in large numbers of low-income households.

The estimates presented here were calculated using merged public use data from the NSECE Household Child-level Quick Tabulation file, the Household file, and the Household Survey Calendar file. Calendar data capture time spent in work-related activities in 15-minute increments across the week prior to the interview for the parents (biological, adoptive, or step-) of each child younger than age 13 living in the household. These data were used to create the indicators of parents' work schedules described in the Definitions section below.

Children are the unit of analysis in these estimates, such that we describe the proportion of young children with parents working various types of hours. Our analytic sample of 4,993 children (representing 3,257 households) includes 2,323 Hispanic children (from 1,536 households), 1,673 non-Hispanic white children (from 1,080 households), and 997 non-Hispanic black children (from 641 households) who met the inclusion criteria noted above and had parental calendar data available.^{c,d} Children of other racial/ethnic backgrounds were excluded due to small sample sizes.

We conducted descriptive analyses across multiple indicators of parents' work schedules, testing the statistical significance of mean differences between the three racial/ethnic groups (and by household nativity status within the Hispanic sample). Significant differences are noted in the text, figures, and summary tables. We use consistent notation (a–c) for each pairwise difference for clarity; if one of the superscripts does not appear in a figure or table, the two groups did not differ significantly for that outcome. All analyses were conducted in STATA and were weighted to be representative of children living in U.S. households in 2012.

Definitions

Family structure. We identify whether children live with one or two of their parents (biological, adoptive, or step-) in the household. In our sample, the percentage of children under age 6 living with two parents is 55 percent for Hispanic households, 68 percent for white households, and 37 percent for black households.

Parental work hours. The calendar data capture all times in the week prior to the survey that all parents (or regular caregivers) of children under age 13 in the household were engaged in work or training, attending school, and/or commuting to any of these. These times—when parents are potentially unavailable to care for children—are variously referred to as *work-related activities*, *work activity hours*, or *work hours*. Here, we focus on the work hours of the child's parents. This measure captures work activity in the week prior to the survey, which is distinct from a measure of employment (i.e., there are individuals who may be employed but did not have any work activity during the week in question).

Standard work hours. Standard work activity hours are those that occur between 8 am and 6 pm, Monday through Friday.

Nonstandard work hours. Nonstandard work activity hours are those that occur beyond 8 am and 6 pm, Monday through Friday. They include *early morning hours* (5 am–8 am, Monday–Friday), *evening hours* (6 pm–12 am, Monday–Friday), *overnight hours* (12 am–5 am, Monday–Friday), and *weekend hours* (Saturday–Sunday).

Short advance notice of work hours. Calendar data measured how far in advance respondents usually know the days and hours they will need to work. In this brief, we report on the number of parents who know their work hours one week or less in advance.

^a NSECE Project Team. (2012). *National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)*, 2012. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. <http://doi.org/10.3886/JCPSR35519.v2>

^b A small number of six-year-olds were identified as not being in kindergarten, which may reflect birthdates after the eligibility cut-off or parental decisions to delay kindergarten entry. However, we restrict the analytic sample for this brief to children younger than age 6 to make this work comparable to the broader early childhood literature, which tends to focus on children from birth to age 5.

^c Given the structure of the NSECE data, with information collected about all children under age 13 in the household, some children in our analytic sample are siblings (while others may co-reside in the same household but have different parents). As a sensitivity test for whether duplicate parent calendar data influenced the results, one child was randomly selected from each household and the analyses were re-run. The pattern of findings remained consistent.

^d A small number of age- and income-eligible children were dropped from the analysis because they did not have parental calendar data available (n=160).

Findings

The prevalence of standard and nonstandard parental work hours

Our first analysis estimates the percentage of *all young children in low-income households* who have parents engaged in work activities (including work, job training, and adult education) during standard hours only, nonstandard hours only, or some combination of standard and nonstandard hours. We present these estimates by race/ethnicity and family structure.

As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, the most common parental work schedule experienced by the full sample of young children in low-income households (across race/ethnicity and family structure) involves a combination of standard and nonstandard hours.

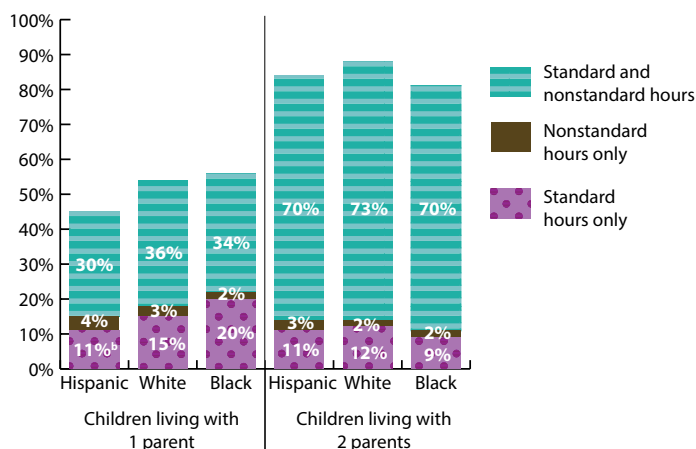
Among Hispanic children living with one parent, approximately 10 percent have a parent who works standard, weekday times exclusively; less than 5 percent have a parent who works nonstandard hours only; and 30 percent have a parent who works both standard and nonstandard hours. An additional 55 percent did not have a parent with work hours in the past week.^c Similar percentages were observed for white and black children living with one parent, with the exception that black children are more likely than their Hispanic counterparts to have a parent who works standard hours only (20 percent versus 11 percent, respectively).

Among those with working parents, 75 percent of Hispanic children in single-parent homes and nearly 90 percent of those in two-parent homes experience at least some nonstandard parental work hours.

differences by race/ethnicity. **Approximately 10 percent of Hispanic children (and their white and black peers) in two-parent homes have a parent working standard hours only; less than 5 percent have a parent working nonstandard hours only; and approximately 70 percent have a parent who works some combination of standard and nonstandard hours.**

When the analysis is limited to children whose parents reported any work activity in the prior week, it becomes even more evident **that nonstandard parental work hours are the norm, rather than the exception, for young children with low-income working parents.** Table 2 shows that, among Hispanic children with parental work activity, 75 percent in single-parent homes and 87 percent in two-parent homes had a parent working nonstandard hours.

Figure 1. The most common type of parental work schedule experienced by young Hispanic children in low-income households includes both standard and nonstandard work hours, similar to their white and black peers.



Among all low-income households: Percentage of children whose parents work standard hours only, nonstandard hours only, or a combination of standard and nonstandard hours, by race/ethnicity and family structure (including those with no parental work activity in the prior week)

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Types of nonstandard hours included in parents' work schedules

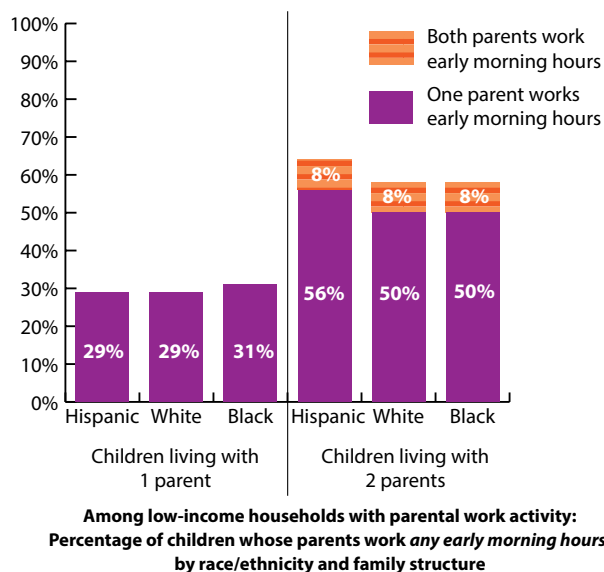
The remainder of this brief focuses on the sample of *children whose parents reported work activity in the prior week* to estimate the percentage of children whose parents worked during four types of nonstandard times: early morning, evening, overnight, and weekend hours.

First, we find that **early morning work hours (between 5 am and 8 am) are relatively common in low-income households with young children** (Figure 2). Among those

^c As noted in the Definitions box, our measure captures work activity in the week prior to the survey and not rates of employment, which may be higher.

with working parents, 29 percent of Hispanic children in one-parent homes and 64 percent in two-parent homes have a parent who works early morning hours. Included in the latter estimate is the small percentage (8 percent) of children for whom both parents report early morning hours as part of their schedule. There are no statistically significant race/ethnic differences in these percentages.

Figure 2. Among low-income households with parental work activity, 1 of 3 Hispanic children living with one parent and 2 of 3 living with two parents has a parent who works early morning hours (5 am–8 am).



Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

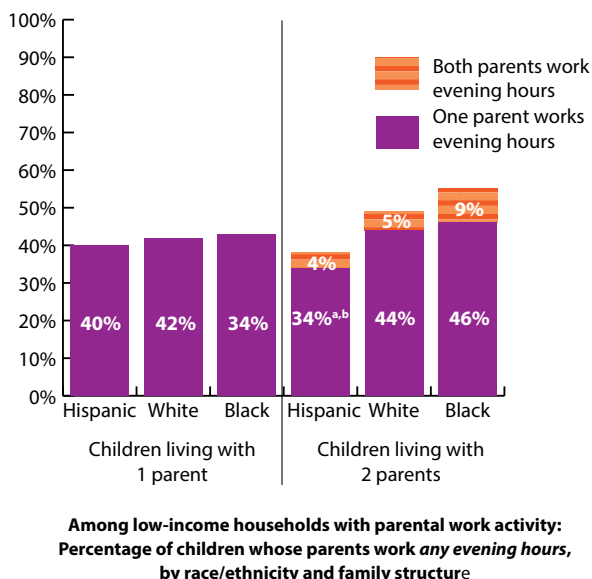
^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Evening parental work hours (6 pm–12 am) are also common, experienced by roughly 2 of 5 Hispanic children with low-income working parents (Figure 3). In one-parent homes, the percentage of Hispanic children with a parent who works in the evening (40 percent) is comparable to their white and black peers. In two-parent homes, Hispanic children are somewhat less likely than white and black children to have a parent who works evening hours (38 percent versus 49 and 55 percent, respectively); fewer than 5 percent of Hispanic children have both parents working evening hours.

Figure 3. Among low-income households with parental work activity, 2 of 5 Hispanic children has a parent who works evening hours (6 pm–12 am).



Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

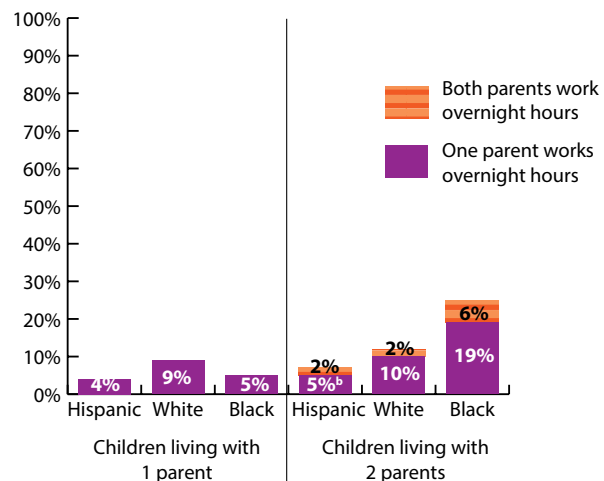
^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Very few Hispanic children have parents who work overnight hours (12 am–5 am), as shown in Figure 4. Among those with working parents, only 4 percent of Hispanic children living with one parent and 7 percent of those living with two parents have a parent who works these hours (2 percent of whom have two parents working overnight hours). In general, overnight parental work hours are also uncommon for white and black children in low-income households. However, in two-parent homes, black children are more likely to have parents who work overnight hours than Hispanic children (25 versus 7 percent).

Figure 4. Among low-income households with parental work activity, very few Hispanic children with low-income working parents have a parent who works overnight hours (12 am–5 am).



Among low-income households with parental work activity:
Percentage of children whose parents work any overnight hours,
by race/ethnicity and family structure

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

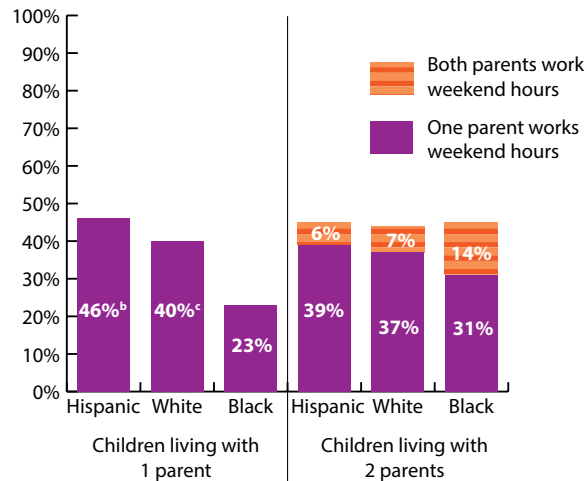
^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Weekend parental work hours are experienced by approximately 45 percent of Hispanic children with low-income working parents (Figure 5). In one-parent homes, this percentage is similar to that for white children (40 percent), but higher than for black children (23 percent). In two-parent homes, the prevalence of parental work on the weekend is similar for Hispanic, white, and black children (approximately 45 percent).

Figure 5. Among low-income households with parental work activity, nearly half of Hispanic children have a parent who works weekend hours.



Among low-income households with parental work activity:
Percentage of children whose parents work any weekend hours,
by race/ethnicity and family structure

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Short advance notice of work hours

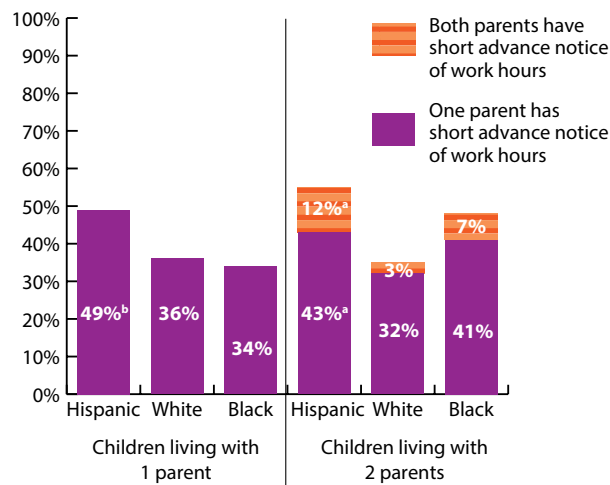
The NSECE household survey asks how far in advance parents know their work hours for a particular week. Longer advance notice is helpful to parents and allows them to plan for child care and organize family life more generally; on the other hand, short notice may interrupt family routines and leave parents scrambling to arrange care.

Hispanic children's parents, in particular, are likely to receive short advance notice of their work hours, defined here as one week or less in advance.

In one-parent homes with reported work activity, 49 percent of Hispanic children had a parent who received short notice of work hours, more than comparable figures for black (34 percent) and—marginally—for white (36 percent) children.

In two-parent homes with work activity, 43 percent of Hispanic children have one parent who received short advance notice of their work hours, and 12 percent have two parents with this type of schedule (for a total of 55 percent). These rates are higher than those for white children (32 percent and 3 percent, for a total of 35 percent), but similar to figures for black children (41 percent and 7 percent, for a total of 48 percent).

Figure 6. Among low-income households with parental work activity, 1 of 2 Hispanic children has a parent with short advance notice of their work hours.



Among low-income households with parental work activity: Percentage of children whose parents have short advance notice of their work hours, by race/ethnicity and family structure

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

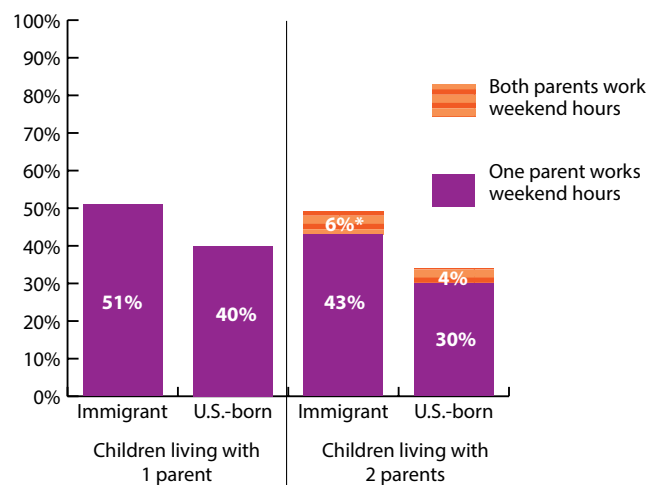
^c Difference between white children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Do work schedule characteristics vary significantly by Hispanic household nativity status?^d

Although we find that the prevalence of early morning, evening, and overnight parental work hours is similar for Hispanic children in immigrant and non-immigrant households with working parents (results not shown), significant differences emerged for weekend hours and advance notice of work schedule.

Hispanic children in immigrant households are more likely to have a parent who works weekend hours than their counterparts in non-immigrant households (although the difference is statistically significant only for children living with two parents) (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Hispanic children in low-income immigrant households are somewhat more likely than those in non-immigrant households to experience parental work on the weekends.



Among low-income Hispanic households with parental work activity: Percentage of children whose parents work any weekend hours, by household nativity and family structure

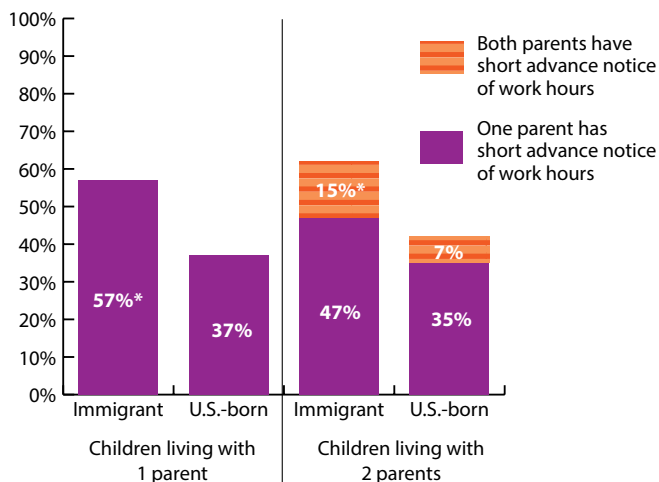
Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

* Difference between Hispanic children in immigrant and U.S.-born households is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Consistent with the suggestion in the literature that immigrant workers often have less predictable work hours than their non-immigrant counterparts, we find that **Hispanic children in immigrant households are more likely than those in non-immigrant households to have parents who receive short advance notice of their work schedule** (Figure 8). This characteristic can be particularly challenging for securing and maintaining ECE arrangements, and applies to more than half of Hispanic children in low-income immigrant households with working parents.

^d In this analysis, a household with at least one adult who was foreign-born was identified as an *immigrant household*. A household in which all adults were born in the United States was identified as a *U.S.-born household*.

Figure 8. Among low-income Hispanic households with parental work activity, percentage of children whose parents have short advance notice of their work hours, by household nativity and family structure



Among low-income Hispanic households with parental work activity:
Percentage of children whose parents have short advance notice of their work hours, by household nativity and family structure

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

* Difference between Hispanic children in immigrant and U.S.-born households is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Discussion

Parental nonstandard work hours—during the weekend, evening, and early morning—are a common experience for young Hispanic children in low-income households, as they are for their non-Hispanic white and black peers. Among those with working parents, 75 percent of Hispanic children in single-parent homes and nearly 90 percent of those in two-parent homes experience at least some nonstandard parental work hours. Most parents in these households do not work standard or nonstandard hours exclusively, but rather some combination of both.

These results have potential implications for Hispanic children's participation in ECE, especially in publicly funded programs focused on child enrichment (e.g., Head Start/Early Head Start, public pre-K). These programs primarily target children in low-income families and generally operate during traditional weekday hours, often in the morning. Our findings suggest, however, that parental work is rarely limited to these hours. Parents who work nonstandard hours may still enroll children in these programs, but the schedule mismatch may require extra time and resources to arrange transportation and/or additional child care arrangements to cover work hours. Public ECE programs can help meet families' needs by offering wrap-around care options that allow for early

drop-off and late pick-up; however, weekend work hours are more difficult for most formal programs to accommodate. Instead, informal arrangements with family, friends, and neighbors may address this gap, or some parents may use weekend work hours to trade off care with a parent who works during the week.

Recent national child care provider data from the NSECE study highlights potential gaps between the schedules of ECE providers and low-income working Hispanic parents. Centers that serve a high proportion of Hispanic children are less likely than those serving a low proportion to offer full-time weekday care (47 and 58 percent, respectively). Full-time hours are more likely to be offered by home-based providers. This analysis also indicates that few providers, regardless of type of program or proportion of Hispanic children served, offer weekend and evening hours.⁷

Overnight work hours were the least common type of nonstandard schedule reported, affecting less than 5 percent of Hispanic children in single-parent homes and less than 10 percent in two-parent homes. Parents of young children may avoid nighttime hours whenever possible given the lack of care options during this time; concerns about overnight care, especially with strangers; and/or the strain that these work hours can impose on personal and family well-being.⁸

We examined parental work schedule characteristics separately by family structure given potentially different constraints, resources, and strategies across one- and two-parent households. Two-parent families may have more flexibility to divide or trade off employment and child care responsibilities. Approximately one-third of Hispanic children in two-parent homes have only one parent engaged in work activity, while two-thirds have two working parents. We find that most low-income Hispanic dual-earner couples with young children do not work the same types of nonstandard hours. For example, fewer than 5 percent of Hispanic children in two-parent homes experience both parents working evening hours. This may be an intentional decision by families to maximize parental care—especially during nonstandard times, which tend to be more closely associated with home and family life.

The predictability of parents' schedules from week to week also has implications for children's care. We find that roughly half of all Hispanic children with working parents have a parent who receives short advance notice (1 week or less) of their work hours, which is likely to complicate ECE utilization given that ECE programs typically require children to attend on a regular schedule. These parents may use informal arrangements because they tend to offer more flexibility in terms of variable hours and charging only for actual hours of care provided. Notably, this work

characteristic occurs more often in immigrant Hispanic households than in U.S.-born Hispanic households. Recent analyses of child care supply data in the NSECE indicate that more than one-third of providers serving a large proportion of Hispanic children allow for variable hours and adjust charges accordingly, which can accommodate parents with unpredictable or fluctuating hours. However, this flexibility is more likely to be available with home-based providers than from center-based programs.⁹

Hispanic children in immigrant, two-parent households are more likely to have a parent who works weekend hours than their counterparts in non-immigrant households. Additionally, children in immigrant households are more likely to have a parent with short advance notice of their work hours. Immigrant Hispanic parents may be more likely to hold the types of jobs that require weekend work and/or have variable schedules; this may be especially true for those with limited English or documentation status concerns (although we do not explore this association here). However, higher rates of weekend work might also reflect families' decisions about how to organize work and child care demands. Weekend work hours by one parent may allow the other parent (or another adult in the household) to work weekdays and trade off care for children. If immigrant families have a stronger preference to keep young children in parental care and/or have fewer available ECE options than non-immigrant families, they may seek out this type of work schedule when possible.

Interestingly, the prevalence of early morning, evening, and overnight parental work hours is similar for Hispanic children in immigrant and non-immigrant households. However, it is possible that the implications of these types of work hours for parents' ECE searches and decision-making may differ by household nativity.

Although we do not explore this possibility here, affordable, high-quality ECE options that match families' schedules may be less accessible to families who are recent arrivals to the United States, have limited English skills, and/or have concerns related to a household member's documentation status. At the same time, a recent analysis of administrative data from Chicago shows higher rates of participation in publicly funded ECE programs for Hispanic children in Spanish-speaking and immigrant households, relative to their Hispanic peers in households without these characteristics, suggesting that local context may matter.¹⁰

This descriptive brief contributes to the sparse literature on the work lives of low-income Hispanic parents raising young children. The findings indicate that, as with many of their peers in low-income white and black households, Hispanic children are exposed to parental work schedules that include hours beyond the standard weekday. A companion brief using the NSECE calendar data on children's schedules finds that 2 of every 3 Hispanic children in ECE arrangements experience time in care during nonstandard times, and that care provided during nonstandard hours is associated with less use of center-based arrangements.¹¹ A potential next step in this work is to use data like the NSECE to more directly link parents' work schedule characteristics to children's child care schedules, examining associations between certain types of hours and ECE search difficulties, utilization patterns, and missed work because of child care problems.

Our findings also highlight the need for more in-depth research on the processes by which Hispanic parents negotiate and coordinate work schedules and children's care, to better understand the accommodations and trade-offs that are made. More information is also needed on how decisions related to employment and ECE are made within the larger context of household needs and resources, including the presence of other adults and older children. For example, although this analysis focused on the work schedules of each child's parents, more than one-quarter of low-income Hispanic children also have a nonparental adult in their household.¹² Complex household structures may increase the number of individuals available to care for children, but also increase the number of schedules that must be coordinated.

Finally, additional research is needed to track how the changing ECE landscape is meeting the needs of low-income Hispanic families. One of the stated goals of the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care Development Fund is to promote more flexible ECE options for low-income families by increasing the supply and quality of care available during nontraditional times; however, states have significant latitude around when and how they implement this objective. One recent analysis suggests that state-level child care policies and administrative practices may interact with demographic characteristics in ways that differentially affect Hispanic families and contribute to racial/ethnic disparities in CCDF utilization.¹³

Table 1 . Share of young children in low-income households who experience parental work during standard and nonstandard hours

	Children living with 1 parent			Children living with 2 parents		
	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black
Parent work activity during standard weekday hours only	11% ^b	15%	20%	11%	12%	9%
Parent work activity during nonstandard hours only	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Parent work activity during standard and nonstandard hours	30%	36%	34%	70%	73%	70%
Sample size	1,249	557	722	1,074	1,116	275

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 2 . Share of young children with low-income working parents who experience different work schedule characteristics

	Children living with 1 parent			Children living with 2 parents		
	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black
Among those with at least one working parent:						
Parent work activity during standard hours						
One parent	91%	94%	96%	64%	63%	60%
Both parents	--	--	--	33%	34%	38%
Parent work activity during nonstandard hours						
One parent	75%	72%	64%	65%	61%	58%
Both parents	--	--	--	22%	26%	30%
Parent work activity during early morning hours (5am-8am)						
One parent	29%	29%	31%	56%	50%	50%
Both parents	--	--	--	8%	8%	8%
Parent work activity during evening hours (6pm-12am)						
One parent	40%	42%	34%	34% ^{a,b}	44%	46%
Both parents	--	--	--	4%	5%	9%
Parent work activity during overnight hours (12am-5am)						
One parent	4%	9%	5%	5% ^b	10%	19%
Both parents	--	--	--	2%	2%	6%
Parent work activity during weekend hours (Sat.-Sun.)						
One parent	46% ^b	40% ^c	23%	39%	37%	31%
Both parents	--	--	--	6%	7%	14%
Parent knows work schedule 1 week or less in advance						
One parent	49% ^b	36%	34%	43% ^a	32%	41%
Both parents	--	--	--	12% ^a	3%	7%
Sample size	560	304	382	902	951	213

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

^a Difference between Hispanic children and white children is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

^b Difference between Hispanic children and black children is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

^c Difference between white children and black is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

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About the Center

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families is a hub of research to help programs and policy better serve low-income Hispanics across three priority areas—poverty reduction and economic self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education. The Center was established in 2013 by a five-year cooperative agreement from the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to Child Trends in partnership with Abt Associates and New York University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and University of Maryland, College Park. This publication was made possible by Grant Number 90PH0025 from OPRE. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of OPRE, ACF, or HHS.

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